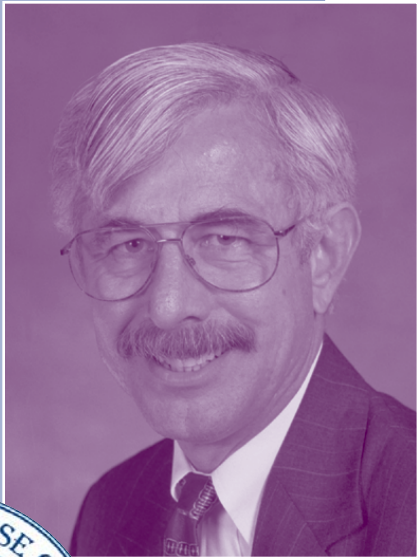
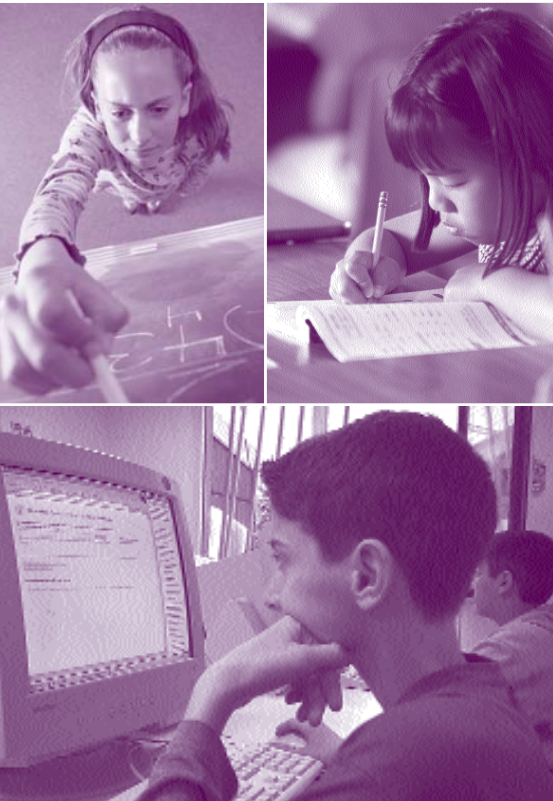


State Representative

# Duane Cheney



## Session Report



- ☑ Economic Development in Northwest Indiana
- ☑ The New State Budget
- ☑ Education Issues

# Economic Development

I believe it is the duty of the General Assembly to provide the opportunities for Indiana to **create, maintain and increase good-paying jobs** in growth areas of our economy. This year's legislature made economic development in Northwest Indiana a priority.

I was pleased to work with Rep. Chet Dobis and Rep. Ralph Ayres in the House to pass the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA). This project has the potential to have the biggest impact on our local economy since the steel industry located here in the early 1900s.

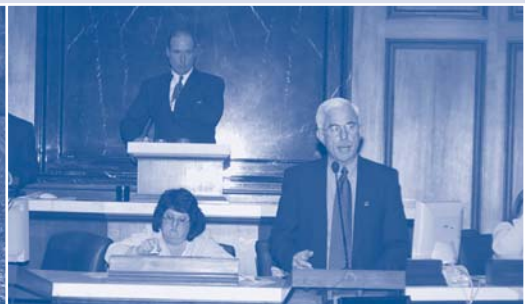
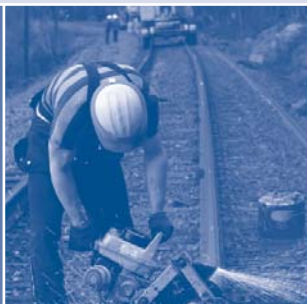
Ours is an economy in transition, with China poised to dramatically increase steel production over the next five years and other industries facing an array of challenges. The legislature has taken the first step to **looking toward the future** through the enactment of the RDA, the first of its kind in Indiana.

**The key is transportation,** connecting us to

Chicago, the nation and the world. **Extended service on the South Shore rail line** will assist commuters by connecting Valparaiso and other areas to the jobs and economic opportunities of Chicago. The northern area of our district will benefit from **less traffic and reduced pollution on 80/94 along with shoreline development.** Portage is currently the only city in Northwest Indiana without shoreline access. The expansion of the Gary Regional Airport will result in **ease of access to air travel, construction jobs, permanent jobs and serve as a lure to companies looking for new business locations.**

As long as Lake County has no local income tax, the CEDIT revenue collected from Lake County residents working in Porter County will help ease our community's financial obligations to the RDA.

**The future looks bright for Northwest Indiana.** I look forward to the economic benefits of the RDA to our region and will keep you updated as various projects take shape and move forward.





# INDIANA'S NEW BUDGET

## School Funding Cuts and Increased Property Taxes



**T**he new state budget that passed by a narrow margin increases property taxes and, at the same time, cuts funding for local schools. After years of bipartisan efforts to reform education and reduce property taxes, the current governor and his majority party have approved a budget that will cut state funding for many schools and raise property taxes by nearly \$850 million.

There are no minimum guarantees in state funding for schools, which means more than 140 school corporations will receive less money. Those corporations will be forced to eliminate teachers, to cut programs and to increase class sizes. Any additional funding for public schools will come primarily from raising local property taxes.

There will be reduced state support through the Property Tax Replacement Credit (PTRC), another move that will increase local property taxes. This eliminates the promise of just three years ago to provide more state support to combat rising property taxes in light of the historic and controversial statewide reassessment.

In addition, funding for the program that provides health care for the elderly, disabled and children will increase by five percent, although bipartisan experts have predicted a 10-percent growth. State assistance for road repairs and improvements will decrease as well.

It is a shame that the legacy of this session will be passage of a budget that turns its back on Indiana's schoolchildren and property taxpayers. For anyone who cares about education and local taxpayers, it is indefensible.



**Rep. Cheney debates legislation on the House floor.**

## Protecting Victims

**V**ictims will be automatically notified when offenders are released from prison or have their status changed. Offenders on home detention will be ordered to wear monitoring devices.

## Sex Offenders

**A** person convicted of possessing child pornography who has a prior conviction for that offense will be required to register as a sex offender. The state will be allowed to seek life in prison without parole for a person who has multiple felony offenses involving sex crimes against a child.

## Speed Limits

**H**oosier drivers soon will be able to go faster on major roadways in Indiana.

Effective July 1, speed limits on rural sections of interstate highways will increase from 65 to 70

mph for cars

and 60 to 65

mph for

trucks. Speed

limits on four-

lane divided

highways will

increase from

55 to 60 mph

following a study by the Indiana

Department of Transportation to

ensure the safety of higher speeds

on those roads.



## Blood Typing

**Y**ou will be able to request that your blood type be placed on your driver's license, driver's permit or other identification card.

## Contact

Representative

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# Education Issues Update

A number of important education bills were approved this session, but I think the most important measure affecting our children was the state budget. As I discuss in greater detail elsewhere in this newsletter, the new budget will shortchange many schools and force them to eliminate programs and lay off teachers, factors that will hurt our children's ability to get a quality education.

**Here are other major education measures passed in 2005:**

Starting in the 2010-11 school year, students will have to complete the Core 40 curriculum in order to graduate. Core 40 requires students to receive credits in a series of advanced courses,

including English and language arts, math, science, social studies and foreign languages.

Other education bills will change the enrollment date for kindergarten to August 1 from July 1, require schools to adopt rules to prohibit bullying, and provide daily

opportunities for students to recite the Pledge of Allegiance and observe a moment of silence. The state Board of Education will be required to set up cheerleading safety standards and guidelines.

Several proposals were defeated, including plans to move the ISTEP-plus test to the spring and revive the school voucher program.



**Rep. Cheney listens to debate during a House committee meeting.**



**Starting in 2010, Indiana students will have to complete the Core 40 to graduate**

## Representative Duane Cheney

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